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ABSTRACT

Highlighting the issue of violence, this Forum issue contains 12 essays. Titles and authors are: "Passivity in the Face of Violence" (Henri Laborit); "Democratisation without Violence?" (Friedrich Hacker); "Ritualised Violence in Sport" (Christian Bromberger); "Violence in Prisons" (Luige Daga); "Racial Aggression" (Geoffrey Bindman); "Violence in Institution" (Serge Heughebaert); "Schools and Violence" (Liliane Urben); "Criminality and the Mass Media" (Jerzy Sarnecki); "Violence against Women" (Clara Gallini); "A Response to Violence" (Richard Hellbrunn); "Cruelty to Children" (Caroline Mignot); and "International Action to Combat Violence" (Gioacchino Polimeni). (JH)

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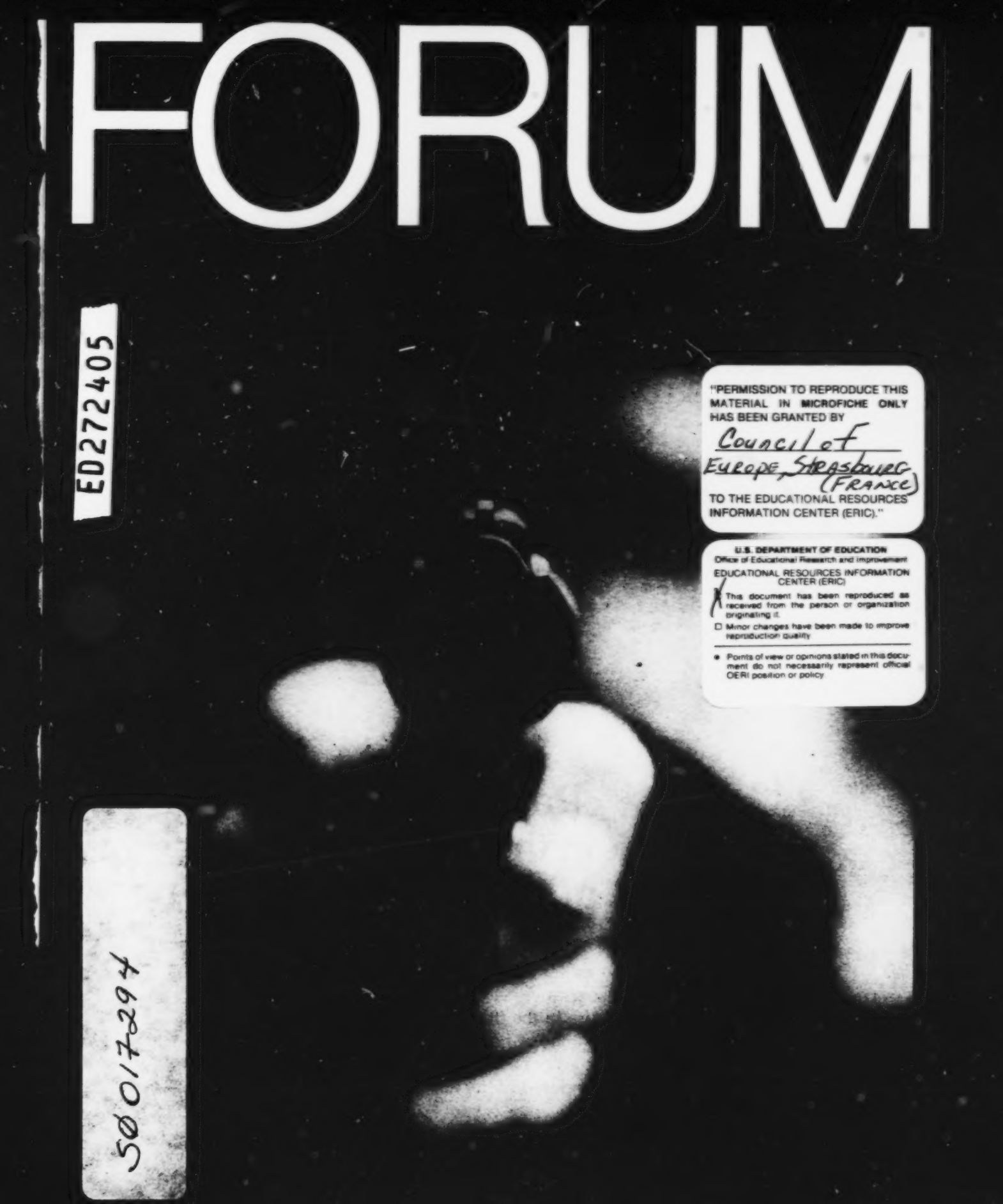

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Is violence, like drug-abuse, a growing social phenomenon? Even if we have no statistics to prove it, it is clear that violence is becoming more and more a part of our daily lives. Violence dominates the front pages of the press and the television news headlines; hardly a day goes by without some individual or collective act of aggression provoking in us feelings of horror and revulsion.

The Council of Europe, in its defence of human rights and social progress, has devoted studies and research to this subject, considering it from various angles: legal, political, social etc. A number of conventions and resolutions which aim to establish a common European policy to fight these forms of violence have been drawn up.

Passivity in the face of violence

Violence which occurs in public to the indifference of passers-by, violence which occurs in the home to the indifference of neighbours: why is it that none of us feel that it is our duty to intervene?

"Help! Help!" came a cry, in English, from the middle of the River Seine, in Paris. Two people were walking along the bank of the river and heard the call for help. One of the two, turning to his friend, said "I think he'd have done better to learn swimming than English, don't you?" Upon that, a policeman appeared and arrested them for breaking the law requiring one to assist a person in danger.

This story is meant to be funny, but it raises several issues regarding the failure to take action when others are attacked or in danger. To act, one must be motivated, and the Wilsonian socio-biologists claim that motivation is stronger the closer your own genes are to those of the person needing help. Thus, by risking your own life, you are selfishly helping to ensure that the genes which you share with the person you are helping are preserved and can be propagated. All our actions are dictated by our selfish genes, and these genes are only altruistic when their own reproductive prospects are at stake. This being so, you are inevitably readier to assist your son, or even your first cousin, than your wife, or especially your mother-in-law, with whom you have no genetic relationship.

These genetic links are clearly open to question and it seems likelier that your passive reaction is essentially determined by your social links with the person in danger. These links are themselves deter-

mined by experience, pleasant or unpleasant memories and the direct or indirect rewards or punishments meted out by society—and will therefore depend on the gratification that the person in danger can offer you. This is why you find it easier to rescue an object, such as your car being vandalised by hooligans, than an immigrant worker or a drunken tramp whom you see being manhandled (a euphemism!) by the officers of the law.

Besides, in our advanced societies, labour has been so minutely divided that dealing with violence is specifically the task of these same guardians of law and order. If you don't wear a helmet or a *képi*, if you work in a factory or office, why should you get mixed up in a fight? That is not what you are paid for.

Ideal image

And yet there is one important reason for acting, if you are a "man"—not a woman. Since you were a child, society has been subtly shoring up its own power structures by telling you that men must be "brave" and "manly". This is certainly one of the reasons for the sarcasm and scorn which are commonly levelled at "effeminate" male homosexuals, while no similar stigma attaches to women. Paratrooper or gangster, as long as you are a man, you are expected to stride into the fray, taking punishment and hitting out yourself.

The ideal image of yourself which society has implanted in your nervous system and which you come to consider as "the essence" of yourself as a man, involves bravely facing up to anything which threatens the existing social order. It may be noted in passing that this social order is itself the product of violence and revolutionary counter-violence, which were institutionalised only at a later stage. Economic crime, tax evasion etc, are not thought to hurt anyone, and so you have no reason to do anything about them; indeed you should probably join in the fun yourself, since your dominant position can only be strengthened if you do.

But then, if you have received a virile education, stressing values which are "more important" than yourself, why are you not motivated to intervene when violence occurs? Perhaps you are more afraid of the problems you will have with the police, as a witness, than of the physical damage which you may suffer if you do intervene? Perhaps, too, you feel that the ideal image of yourself, which has been instilled in you, should help you up the career and social ladder and not push you into the physical risks involved in intervening in a public incident. You will get more pleasure, happiness and self-esteem from the social position which your "determination" and "courage" have earned for you than from the two black eyes which you are likely to get if you intervene in an isolated incident of violence.

Value judgement

If you had lived at the beginning of the century in a village where everyone knew everyone and social ties were close, you would certainly have done something if you had seen the baker's son assaulting the grocer's daughter. But if you saw the same scene today and the people involved were a group of immigrants and a streetwalker whose services they could not afford, you would merely utter a few flat phrases on the evils of violence or the harmful effects of immigration, repeating what your favourite newspaper says every day. Never having been told that local events must always be seen in their general economic and social context, you would seem to be speaking logically, but would actually be mouthing a mere ideology or value judgement. Our industrialised society has managed the notable feat of bringing together masses of human beings in a small area, where no one knows anyone else, where economics have taken the place of social relationships, and where interest is focused on things rather than people, since relations with others are governed by commodities.

"How is it that the scientific, biological and behavioural approaches to evolution have not shown that "mutual assistance" is at least as important as the struggle for survival, and that survival of the fittest, Darwinism, has become the dominant ideology instead?"

This being so, if "bravery" in the face of violence is merely a cultural reflex, the upholding of a supposedly humanistic or "higher" code, is it really worth the effort? Even animals can behave like this, and it will not necessarily make you a man. On the other hand, to understand why every human action must benefit the species as a whole, we need a knowledge which has nothing to do with morals, religion or law. But that is another story: how is it that the scientific, biological and behavioural approaches to evolution have not shown that "mutual assistance" is at least as important as the struggle for survival, and that survival of the fittest, Darwinism, has become the dominant ideology instead? If by any chance you know the answer, this does not mean that you will yourself remain passive in the face of violence, but you will at least understand why others do so.

At any rate, we can take it that chivalry *per se* is dead. ■

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In a factory specialised in providing armour plating for cars, in Cuneo, Italy, businessmen and politicians who have received death threats pay large amounts of money for the benefit of this protection against attack

Democratisation without violence?

To what extent can social and political change be achieved without recourse to violence? The author, a professor at the Vienna Institute for Research into Conflict, proposes a re-examination of the traditional reasons used to justify aggression and violence.

Winston Churchill remarked in 1955 that it was one of the great ironies of history that we had reached a point where security was the child of terror and survival the twin brother of destruction; his words have often proved true in the meantime. Social and political change has nearly always been attended by violence, and now more so than ever.

As long as one despotic regime was replacing another this seemed natural enough, but the issue changes fundamentally once it is realised—and rightly so—that the means used to bring about political change actually affect the results. However idealistic the final aim may be, democracy which is brought about by bloodshed is flawed by violence in a way which undoubtedly impairs its later functioning. Experts on aggression have pointed out that violence is spuriously legitimised by representing one's own violence, both to oneself and others, as dictated by necessity, natural right, duty, self-defence or service to a higher cause, and making an induced desire for violence seem inherently justified. But they are certainly being too optimistic in insisting that problems which can only be settled by violence must be re-stated in different terms. It is only the others who are urged and expected to renounce violence, and this insistence on non-violence in others all too often masks one's own aggression and paves the way for the use of violence by justifying it as a reaction to violence committed by others.

In the name of nationalism

Nationalism is said to express a love of liberty, but the selfishness, opportunism and power politics of nationalism ride roughshod over freedom and truth, and other nations' claims are ignored whenever they conflict with those of one's own country. Traditionally, nationalism has been the ideology of the "haves"—the propertied classes and the wealthy states, whose expansionist aspirations have been defended on the grounds of their pioneering mission. Taking possession of a vacuum in which no one or hardly anyone lives does not have to be justified. An unquestionably higher level of technical and cultural sophistication allowed the Western nations to extend their sphere of influence into areas where the native populations were backward and underdeveloped. They justified this territorial expansion by taking on themselves the task of educating these populations. As this "burden" carried very real advantages for the educators, the native populations soon realised, once they started coming to a sense of their own identity, that this show of benevolent helpfulness was a pretext and a hypocritical sham.

Nationalistic chauvinism is one of the ideological props of an Establishment which has exploited and humiliated its victims, but it emphasises national identity, and so it has become the battle cry of the outcasts and underdogs—as if the interests of the oppressed were the same as those of their oppressors! But it is not only certain social and economic structures which are being rejected—the real revolution is against the mechanistic, rationalistic and scientifically biased approach which thinks in terms of statistics and quantities and ends by treating the human soul like a piece of machinery.

In proclaiming their national identies, the newly freed slaves, the decolonised and emancipated peoples, are demanding not only that their economic and material needs be satisfied but also that they be recognised and valued for what they and their nations represent and hence as human beings, as individuals. They are struggling against the dependence of the past, imposed and exploited by powers known or unknown, which has kept them in a permanent and degrading state of passivity. They no longer intend to be treated like children by foreigners. They intend to act for themselves and will no longer tolerate being patronised or used by others. In the name of the struggle against

The Lebanon: bones, skulls and rotting bodies bear witness to yet another atrocity

Car bomb on the Boulevard des Invalides in Paris

dictatorship and oppression, assimilation and depersonalisation, they are calling for freedom of action, self-determination and a return to simplicity, spontaneity and natural dignity, which are to be achieved through nationalism.

In South Africa and several South and Central American countries, the domestic situation has worsened to such an extent that rebellion and the violent suppression of rebellion are almost the only options left. A peaceful settlement of these conflicts is therefore unlikely.

The midwife of history

The saying that violence is the midwife of history may be true enough for the past, but reflects a lack of imagination if quoted to suggest that no other alternatives exist, and spells disaster and destruction of the human race if treated as a recipe for future conduct. Ever since it has been known—if not earlier—that war between atomic powers will inevitably lead to self-destruction and is thus obsolete and inappropriate as an extension of politics, it has become necessary to discuss and apply other ways of settling conflicts. Just as it makes sense to treat prisoners well, so it can be scientifically shown that allowing for the interests of one's adversary (who should not be dismissed as an enemy, evil-doer, criminal etc simply because he is on the other side) ultimately makes the best sense for all concerned. On the other hand, we know that people can be affected and manipulated by fear and violence (and that knowledge of this fact has enabled the powers that be to take power and hold on to it). This is no proof, however, that fear and the spreading of fear are, and must remain, the most important reasons for acting; they are certainly not the only ones.

The things which lead people to act —and the ways in which they can act—are more varied, more variable and more unpredictable than has been suspected in the past. Human destiny is neither predetermined nor immutable, neither naturally nor historically decided in advance. Both individually and collectively, human beings can spring surprises—and we shall need surprises to survive.

Under certain conditions, the transition from autocratic to democratic government has already been made with relatively little violence even in the last few decades. The best examples are Portugal, Spain, Greece, to some extent Austria (where the occupying powers, including the USSR, withdrew voluntarily) and Rhodesia, although the latter's strategic unimportance and shortage of natural resources made the process easier. In all of these and other cases, the rival world powers were prepared, either because they had so agreed or because their interests were not at stake, not to fight out their international political conflicts on the soil, ie the backs, of the smaller states, while world opinion, neighbouring states and international organisations all favoured the change to democratic government.

If, however, the disputing parties make unlimited demands regarding national identity, sovereignty and security, there is only one solution—simple, radical and, to the extremists, inevitable. Since the only solutions possible in this situation are blatantly unreasonable, totally unrealistic and morally objectionable, the situation itself must be scrutinised and rectified. It must not be taken as a necessary basis for settlement, but must be seen for what it is—a sure obstacle to settlement. In this way, we can start to explore the factors which are used to justify aggression—identity, security, sovereignty, and national myths (all of them real and valid enough in their own way) cognitively, emotionally and practically, instead of taking them blindly for granted.

Admittedly, the alternatives to self-destruction and ruin call for radical rethinking, decisive external changes and major internal adjustments. All the options which transcend the sterile choice between tyranny and anarchy require imagination, ingenuity, forethought, bold experimentation and unwavering commitment. ■

Dr. Friedrich Hacker,
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The Committee of Ministers calls for the abolition of apartheid in South Africa

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a declaration in which it:

— recalls the Council's commitment to the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe and in the world;

— calls on the South African authorities to take concrete measures with a view to implementing a policy resolutely aimed at the abolishment of apartheid;

— calls on the government of South Africa immediately to release all political prisoners unconditionally;

— makes a pressing appeal to the government of South Africa to initiate a genuine dialogue with the representatives of all parts of the population of South Africa and to lift without delay the state of emergency and all obstacles for that dialogue.

Ritualised violence in sport

Who was to blame? In the aftermath of the Heysel tragedy in which 38 people died, there was no shortage of attempts to unravel its causes and implications. Many think that the violence which occurs at sporting events stems from factors entirely unrelated to sport.

Violence in stadiums is in most cases perpetrated by a few supporters of clubs whose towns or regions are going through a profound social crisis. A map recently published in *Equipe Magazine* showed clearly the correlation between acts of vandalism in the stands and the presence of British teams representing formerly flourishing but now moribund industrial centres (such as Liverpool, with a general unemployment level of 22% and a youth unemployment level of 80%). British hooliganism undoubtedly constitutes a specific phenomenon rooted in an unprecedented social crisis as well as in a tradition of violence among British working-class youth, as illustrated in some recent works by historians.

Looked at from this angle of social pathology, spectator violence may be said to be but the mirror image of the violence pervading all social relationships, a vain assertion of power by the deprived, the absurd price to be paid for an absurd world. A range of other factors that are similarly foreign to the "essence" of sport are alleged to create situations conducive to such outbreaks of violence in sports grounds. One factor is the "crowding phenomenon", to borrow the term used by a present-day sociologist, which ethnologists have shown to be capable of intensifying aggressive drives and generating panic. Another factor is anonymity in a place far removed from one's normal environment, where the taboos of everyday life are momentarily lifted. A third is the consumption of alcohol, which has the well-known effect of releasing inhibitions and in some areas is regarded as a mandatory rite both before and after the match.

According to this theory, spectator violence is nothing else than the vitiating effect of a sick society, whose defects and conflicts are projected in an amplified form into the festive arena of entertainment and recreation.

Although they throw some light on the subject, these explanations leave considerable patches of obscurity. Firstly, "hooligans" belonging to a deprived and disillusioned younger generation are not solely responsible for violent clashes at sports grounds: the phenomenon occurs in societies as varied as Turkey, Egypt, China, Peru and the countries of Eastern Europe and, despite a recent intensification, is part of a long-term trend. Secondly, violence affects sports events in widely differing ways. Why does it become associated with some rather than others?

Individual sports—athletics, tennis, cycling, swimming etc—seldom give rise to scuffles among spectators, whereas it is team sports involving physical contact —football, rugby, ice hockey, basketball, baseball etc—that usually provoke conflicts among the onlookers. This relationship derives from two main aspects of spectator sport, namely a desire to emulate the players and an urge to assert collective identities under cover of inter-club encounters.

"Communion" with the players

Team supporters often say that they are "in communion" with their idols; jubilation, resignation and lamentations against fate (such as a referee's decision) punctuate the various moves affected on the field. The contest between the players is matched by manifestations on the terraces, according to the process of mimicry described by R. Caillois. Few forms of entertainment, incidentally, arouse as much bodily, vocal and emotional participation as sports encounters.

Consequently, the game only needs to "degenerate" (through foul play or supposedly unwarranted action by the referee) for tension in the stands to rise and possibly result in outbreaks of violence between rival supporters. Several surveys have demonstrated (though others have, admittedly, qualified it) this correspondence or causal link between violence on the field and violence on the terraces. Friction between players, with its repercussions on spectators' behaviour, increases in proportion to the importance of the match being played; violent incidents often occur at the season's crucial moments, such as at a match that decides whether one of the teams is relegated to a lower division.

But rough play is a contributory rather than a principal cause of the extraordinary tension accompanying certain sports events. Besides, the team sports that are intrinsically the most violent ones, such as rugby, are not necessarily those which make feelings run high. In fact, the frenzied enthusiasm shown for certain sports seems directly attributable to geographical and social distribution and their ability to heighten collective identities at the various levels of social integration and embody a maximum number of symbolic values and interests.

Football is a case in point. As a simple competitive team game involving physical contact, this sport is nowadays one of the few elements of a worldwide male culture, a sort of universal referent; only the United States and a few scattered outposts are still outside its sway. Competitions are organised according to a "them-and-us" principle reflecting the major divisions of society (from inter-firm tournaments to the World Cup): each encounter offers the spectators an opportunity for symbolically expressing a local, regional or national facet of their identity.

Close enquiries among supporters reveal that this spectator sport is the potential source of a remarkably varied range of identification possibilities—identification, of course, with the whole team, which is expected to confirm the excellence and superiority of the membership group; identification with a given player, which varies according to the social or ethnic background of the supporters (in Turin for instance, many young people and workers prefer Boniek's drive and dash to Platini's tactical and organisational qualities, more

admired by the executive class); identification with individuals in the same age group as oneself (in the case of young supporters), with an earlier period in one's life (affection for older players) or with values corroded by dominant ideologies (masculinity, *machismo*, comradeship, challenge, regionalism etc). All these factors, and probably some others too, explain the remarkable craze for football matches and football clubs, the extreme emotional cathexis surrounding the sport and the intensity of the mimetic involvement it arouses.

Ritualised war

In encapsulating such values and heightening antagonism, a football match assumes every aspect of a kind of ritualised war. This is borne out by the technical vocabulary used, as well as by the terminology of commentators, with their propensity for military imagery. The "opponents", backed up by a few "mercenaries", "fight" for possession of the ball and use the "deadly weapon" of cutting the ball back across the face of the goal in accordance with a "strategy" studied beforehand on the blackboard. The manager may have urged his players to make a "spearhead attack", calling for a "general mobilisation" of his troops and their supporters prior to a "vital" match. In countries where there is a short winter break in the championship, it is significantly dubbed the "truce". In the course of the season's struggles, which follow a fixed schedule, the club will adopt *ad hoc* "allies" or "take revenge" on a particularly hostile team (often the one from the next town which, as a rival for regional supremacy, is made a hate-object in the notorious "derbies").

"Football, then, has both martial and religious aspects, but they are rigorously codified according to a set of rules whose function is precisely to replace actual violence by a ritualisation of violence."

This atmosphere of ritualised warfare also prevails on the terraces: neither banners nor uniforms in club colours are absent; and an injured member of the opposing team is assailed by a chorus of death-sentences from the hysterical supporters. Just before some matches, the supporters will display the opposing club's coffin as a symbol of the life-or-death nature of the contest. The expected outcome of the match is the immolation of the opponent, the expiatory victim whose slaying will reconcile the community with itself. This aspect of playing and watching sport gives us a glimpse of another essential feature of these events, their close affinity with the religious world.

All the ingredients of a ceremony are to be found at a sports match: the faithful, who express their devotion in accordance with a strict pattern (sitting down and standing up at precise points in the match) and often form brotherhoods (supporters' clubs); celebrants responsible for performing the sacrifice, with whom the faithful "commune"; an organisational apparatus, the club, structured in a rigorous hierarchy like a Church; a place of worship, the stadium, the inviolable preserve of the celebrants; a liturgical calendar which reaches certain high points in the course of the year; a dramatisation of social relations within the precincts of the stadium (official stands, popular terraces etc) like the strict distribution of the various social groups at major religious ceremonies; finally, the expectation of the sacrifice in a mimetic key (according to a process admirably described by René Girard), which marks the triumph of the righteous over the unrighteous, of good over evil.

Football, then, has both martial and religious aspects, but they are rigorously codified according to a set of rules whose function is precisely to replace actual violence by a ritualisation of violence. Certain eras in the history of sport are instructive

It is team sports involving physical contact that usually provoke conflicts among the onlookers, not individual sports

from this point of view. The British colonisers of the Trobriand Islands in the Western Pacific, dismayed by the ravages of tribal warfare among the natives, introduced cricket as a substitute, whereupon cricket matches assumed functions similar to those of the earlier conflicts by incorporating all the symbolism of war. Closer to home, the codification of the rules of football in 19th-century England, as in the case of Florentine *calcio* some five hundred years before, was a measure of "social hygiene" designed to control contests that were liable to prove extremely violent. The regulating of *calcio* denoted a state counter-offensive against the misdeeds of the "brigades", armed gangs in the pay of the aristocracy; the idea was to supplant violent acts with a dramatised, codified depiction thereof.

As competitive events, team sports involving physical contact—especially those enjoying widespread popularity—offer an ideal area for the assertion of collective identities and the expression of rivalry and antagonism. By virtue of their nature and connotations, they symbolise life, death, war and grandiose religious celebrations.

In normal circumstances, the whole potential of violence inherent in these confrontations is strictly ritualised; and to this a notable contribution is usually made by supporters' clubs whose elaborate ceremonial gestures, clothes and other tokens of comradeship help to organise, forestall and curb any participation of too physical a kind.

It is nevertheless plain that any competitive event attended by supporters of the two teams takes place in a tense and potentially explosive atmosphere. The ritualistic process can be disrupted by any one of the factors mentioned in the opening paragraphs. An additional element that can tip the scales is the fact that what happens on the field of play is not the only focus of attention. At the same time another drama is being enacted among the supporters of each team, who watch, answer and provoke one another. They are also conscious that they are themselves being observed by the media, and this merely stimulates their eagerness to win the parallel match, the "battle of the spectators".

The reason why such a ritual, one of whose functions is to contain violence by means of mimetic substitutes, is liable to lead to direct clashes between the participants is that its very nature is conducive to outbreaks of violence. Being based on a win-or-lose confrontation between "goodies" and "baddies", it evokes life and death. Indeed, it may be likened to a ritual such as Carnival and certain religious ceremonies which present enough similarities with actual conflict situations for representation to be temporarily ousted by action in certain sets of circumstances. ■

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Violence in prisons

In recent months, violent riots in European prisons have again turned public attention to the violence that many consider to be a characteristic feature of prisons.

Violence, in the sense of society's violence towards those whom it subjects to penal surveillance entailing deprivation of liberty, violence directed by the prisoners against prison property and staff and against their fellow-prisoners, and violence by prison staff towards the inmates. All this tends to brand prison as a hub of violence and a microcosm in itself: a completely institutionalised "living hell", as portrayed in literature (from Hugo to Papillon), in films (from Becker's *Le Trou* to Barbash's recent *Beyond the Walls)* and by the media, which do not generally feature prison problems until they hit the headlines, at which point the public is informed of sensational riots, escapes, murders and violence of all kinds.

On the other hand, not all the violence that is a daily feature of prison life comes to our knowledge, either because it is not reported (as, for instance, in the case of unreported rape) or because, even though reported, it is not significant for statistical purposes (since offences committed in prison are not usually included in overall crime statistics). Although the statistics for prison suicides are known, there are very often no statistics for self-mutilation and self-inflicted injury, common in prisons.

It can therefore be concluded that, whereas, from one point of view, there is "too much" talk of violence in prisons—in that the media do not report on prisons except in connection with sensational violent incidents—from another point of view, there is "too little" discussion of such violence: not enough is known about, and insufficient study has been made of, particular forms of violent behaviour and their causes and patterns. As a result of the first factor, society, being aware only of unfortunate incidents, is distancing itself increasingly from prisons and calling for ever harsher and more repressive measures. As a result of the second factor, those in charge of prisons are not sufficiently well-informed to be able to improve measures to prevent such behaviour. A determined stand is called for here since prison—the last resort among the possible forms of punishment—should entail "only" deprivation of liberty, and should safeguard the prisoner against any additional punishment not provided for by law.

A means of communication

Roughly speaking, violence can be said to indicate the degree of tension in prison. In its collective form, for example, the staging

of a protest, it is basically a means of communication between the prison and the outside world—civilised society, the legislature, as represented by politicians, and the judiciary. Individual violence, whether self-inflicted or directed against others is also, in many cases, a symbolic form of communication—a means of airing personal problems (connected with judicial proceedings or everyday prison life). It invariably stems from a breakdown in institutional forms of communication and distorted relations with other people.

There is another kind of violence in prisons, however, triggered by aggressive instincts that are neither harnessed nor inhibited by normal social activity: sexual violence, involving violent assault on weaker prisoners and the daily abuse by "habitual" offenders of casual offenders not experienced or tough enough to withstand daily bullying.

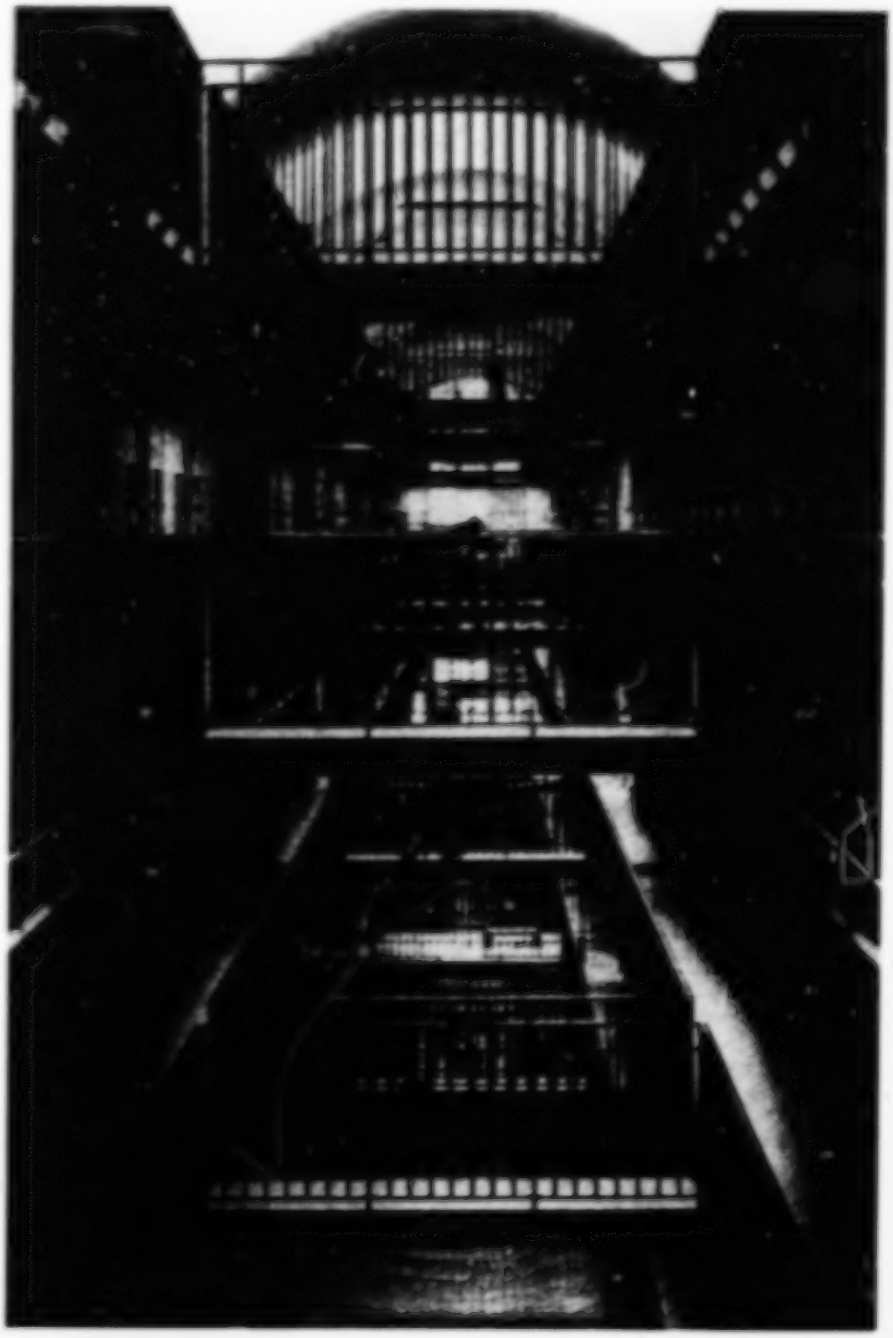
What preventive measures can be taken to bring down the level of violence in prisons? First and foremost, what is needed is a general commitment on the part of governments to reducing the number of prison sentences, that is, to minimising the practice of total deprivation of liberty, which is a form of "institutional violence". This is an approach which involves strategies already familiar in European countries: the amendment of the law so that certain offences are no longer punishable or are no longer considered as serious indictable offences, and the use of a wide range of alternatives to imprisonment, considered at length in numerous Council of Europe resolutions.

In the remaining cases, where, as a last resort, the punishment is imprisonment, attempts must be made to minimise the causes of internal tension which spark off violence. One approach is to improve ordinary two-way communication and information exchange between staff and prisoners and between the prisoners themselves, so often fraught with difficulty, as well as fostering wider-ranging communication between the prison and the outside world. This can be done by granting prison leave, which can reduce the tension caused by sexual frustration, facilitating family contacts, allowing free access to the media, and providing work and creative activities which can help offset adverse trends and avert the breakdown in communication that occurs when communication channels are lacking or operate in one direction only.

Contact with the community—public involvement in the enforcement of sentences—invariably reduces violence in prisons. If prisoners are to break away from the prison sub-culture, they need to have a positive image of themselves, of which only a glimpse appears through the eyes of society.

Feeling of abandonment

This in itself is not enough, however. Prisons bear the brunt of all the defects of the judicial administration system. The slowness of criminal proceedings generates tension and violence. If, in accordance with Council of Europe guidelines, fewer people were detained on remand and the recommended judicial procedures were followed, a whole range of violent behaviour among those awaiting trial (especially, in this case, self-inflicted violence) could be greatly attenuated. Here again, a commitment on the part of administrative staff and the judges respon-



sible for sentence enforcement is crucial if prisoners are to receive regular information that will avert or lessen the danger of their becoming desperate and feeling they have been abandoned—a feeling which is the root cause of many acts of violence.

Lastly, there is "unprovoked" violence, tending not to be affected by the factors mentioned, which can all be combated by general preventive measures. This kind of violence is typical of the most dangerous offenders, professional criminals, and those with personality disorders. It is perhaps these cases that present the greatest challenge to administrations, since it is necessary for practical purposes to separate the prisoners, single out the most dangerous for special treatment and, at the same time, ensure that no one is completely denied the facilities which any civilised society must provide if imprisonment is not only to serve a punitive purpose but also to provide an opportunity for rehabilitation.

The problem is therefore to strike a fine balance between the need to protect the safety of the staff and prisoners (totalling 397,798 in the Council of Europe countries as at 1 February 1985), most of whom want to be left in peace while they are serving their sentences, and the need for humane prison treatment that will limit the psychological damage resulting from imprisonment and, at the same time, constantly sustain the hopes which the whole human race must unceasingly nurture, which indissolubly links every prisoner with the community. ■

Luigi Daga
Ministry of Justice, Rome

Racial aggression

Racial harassment and violent attacks on coloured people have escalated in recent years in the United Kingdom. This article examines how legislation, and in particular its application by the police force, can provide a better protection for ethnic minorities.

In 1984, the Greater London Council published a detailed study of racial harassment in London. It had been prepared by a panel of inquiry which took evidence from many people, including ethnic minority individuals and representatives. After pointing out that racial harassment was by no means a new phenomenon, the study concluded that the scale of attacks on Asians especially had grown to alarming proportions. Worse still, there was no confidence among minorities that the police were carrying out their responsibility for protecting them and for bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Not only did it seem to the GLC that racial harassment had a low priority in overall policing policy; the police themselves included a number of officers whose racial prejudices affected their behaviour, leading some to commit racial harassment themselves. The existence of a significant problem of racism within the Metropolitan Police had already been asserted with detailed supporting evidence by the independent Policy Studies Institute in its report *Police and People in London* published the previous year.

The evidence relied on by the GLC was mainly collected in 1981 and 1982. Since then a further escalation has taken place. In July 1985, four members of the Kasam family died in an arson attack on their home in Ilford, East London. The Home Secretary deplored the damage such attacks were causing to the confidence and security of ethnic minorities, but many more attacks have occurred since then: on 8 August, 9 members of the Miah family were luckily rescued from their petrol-bombed home. Two days later an Asian home was set on fire a few miles away and on the same night four Asian waiters had to jump from the first floor window of a restaurant when it was set on fire by arsonists. Mr. Safiq Islam of the Community Alliance for Police Accountability reported 20 serious attacks during the month.

On 12 August 1985, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Kenneth Newman, met the Commission for Racial Equality and promised that reports of different police strategies for dealing with racial attacks in five areas would shortly be received, but these reports have not been published and the attacks go on.

Disillusionment

Indeed, on the contrary, there is evidence that police action is exacerbating the situation: in July a number of black youngsters (the "Newham 7") faced a lengthy trial at the Old Bailey and were convicted of offences resulting from their resistance to racial attacks by white youngsters who largely escaped punishment. Disillusionment among black people can only be reinforced by the spectacle of those who feel driven to defend themselves being punished while their assailants go free.

Of course, there is no substitute for Government determination to ensure that sufficient and properly used police resources are available to bring to justice those who commit racial attacks. There is, however, a strong argument for more explicit legislative provisions than the law at pres-

ent contains—not only to define the powers and duties of the police but to involve other agencies as well. A Labour Member of Parliament, Mr. Harry Cohen, introduced a Bill in July 1985 to create a new criminal offence of racial harassment, which would include unprovoked assault, damage to property, writing racial slogans and graffitti, and arson or attempted arson or damage to a building used by a racial or ethnic group.

These would already be offences under the general criminal law but Mr. Cohen's concern was that special responsibilities should be imposed on the police and others concerned with such offences: the conduct, recording, and reporting of the results of investigations into racial harassment would be rigorously regulated. Landlords and local authorities would also be required to inform their tenants of the offence and its consequences. Connivance or neglect by a police officer or other official in dealing with a case of racial harassment would also be an offence. In serious cases, eviction of the perpetrator from local authority or private accommodation could be compelled. Mr. Cohen's Bill unfortunately failed through lack of time, and his call to the Government to introduce a similar Bill of its own has so far fallen on deaf ears.

"If the Government fails to take effective steps to protect ethnic minorities and secure redress for them against racial harassment and violent attacks, their only recourse is self-defence."

The recognition that the police cannot solve the problem on their own is important. Local authorities also have a role to play. At least one, the London Borough of Newham, has already adopted a policy of seeking possession of accommodation occupied by tenants who harass their neighbours. Regrettably, most authorities still take the easy way out when tenants are intimidated, by moving the victims instead of the culprits. This is manifestly unfair to the victims who have done no wrong.

Racist agitators

Other forms of legal action are also being increasingly discussed. Racial attacks are often carried out by youngsters under the influence of racist agitators who themselves keep away from the scene of trouble. Under the Public Order Act 1936 (as amended by the Race Relations Act 1976) incitement to racial hatred is a criminal offence but few prosecutions have been brought. Only the Attorney-General can bring or authorise a prosecution, and, by contrast with other public order offences, the police have no power of arrest. Although Parliament is about to consider major changes in public order law, these weaknesses are not on the agenda for reform. They inhibit the effective use of this law to deter the real instigators of racial violence. Civil claims for damages and private prosecutions are other measures which should be considered, to fill the gap left by an inadequate police response.

If the Government fails to take effective steps to protect ethnic minorities and secure redress for them against racial harassment and violent attacks, their only recourse is self-defence. No one can blame them if they create defensive "vigilante" groups, or feel they must meet violence with violence—nor indeed if they see the police as identified with their racist attackers. If the open conflict and violent retaliation which has been seen lately on the streets of Handsworth, Brixton, and Tottenham is to be stopped, the Government must act not only to tackle underlying economic problems; the violence of white racists must also be firmly restrained. ■

Geoffrey Bindman
Solicitor, London

Mopping up the results of another night of inner-city violence in the United Kingdom

Violence in institutions

Homes and institutions, by the very nature of their function, represent a form of violence against the children they treat. The author examines ways in which this "violence" can be reduced.

I was in the mining country, on my first period of practical training as a youth worker. It was just before nightfall, and the month of June was making a last attempt to bring a note of gaiety into the establishment, a large old house.

The boys and I had gathered together under the office window. We could hear shouts and blows—and it was not just someone putting on an act—somebody was really getting it!

The air was full of anguish and admiration, but we did not know for whom or for what. After what seemed a long time there was silence, both inside and outside the building. I was called in. A teenage boy was on his knees in front of the desk. I had somehow thought the room would be more untidy. Albert, the senior youth worker, gave me a pair of hair clippers and asked me to cut the boy's hair off quite short. I did it. Albert explained his method—hit the boy once and kick the cupboard twice: that makes a lot of noise and noise frightens people—people outside. It intimidates them. It's called giving an example. I can say I was intimidated. I was a new trainee.

It was my first assignment as a youth worker. I was on my own with the man in charge of the home and, from time to time, a second trainee came to put in the odd couple of months. There were 15-20 boys.

I admired Albert. He was a senior youth worker and was good at boxing—the champion of somewhere. It must have been the boxing which had got him promoted to be a senior. He was very much in demand in the area to give a boost to homes which were going downhill. His voice reminded you of a long spell of calm weather from the west—but from time to time he would bellow something out in a voice that would drown a foghorn. He was responsive to emotions. He said nothing, but made himself felt—a sort of John Wayne among youth workers. At that stage, I admired him.

The boys admired him too. He had just arrived, at a time when we were in chaos, and brought the situation back to normal in a few days. He was a peacemaker.

Things had rapidly gone from bad to worse, and violence had taken over the home like a disease. We were all feeling the effects. One boy had split another's head open with a bottle. The oldest took it out on the youngest right down to the cook's dog, which died a pointless death because it was at the bottom of the pecking order. Somebody hit it with an axe.

The youth leader in charge had stupidly challenged the situation by engaging in a wrestling match with two or three boys —and had lost. He had then gone off on sick leave. That was another one gone whom we had liked: whom we would have wished was stronger. No point in talking about it. Then Albert came.

As I was clipping the boy's hair I was thinking that somebody would lose out in this game. Perhaps we would all lose out. I was reassured by Albert's strength, but worried by the way he was doing things. In our little team we never talked about our fears. It wasn't done. We just made up legends of exploits and heroes in the field of youth work—making virile speeches over a drink—and we knew that we were on our own. It was like being on a rudderless boat.

It was June in the mining country. The villages had Flemish names even though people still spoke Polish. Night was falling over a calm institution. And the shutters were being closed.

Betrayal

Violence in institutions. It is there even before the child is put into an institution—at the time when he or she is taken into care—without going into what happens when the case is being investigated. Social workers intervene and take the child away for its own good. The parents finally agree, under pressure—often financial—and there comes this terrible impression of being abandoned, betrayed, torn away.

Then the child is moved, is taken away from his harmful environment. We set his problem at a distance; not working through it with him in the setting where it has arisen, in the setting where it makes sense. He is uprooted—with all that one can say to a child or a teenager to bring them round to some measure of agreement, to assuage the anguish (particularly that of the man or girl acting as escort). You wrap them up and avoid their questions. The lovely institution at the end of the road. "How long will you be staying there? Oh!... not long!..." The illusion of time, and the disillusion which sets in afterwards. On the other side of the coin, there are oversimplified slogans such as "the worst family is better than the best institution", "the child is a symptom which must not be moved" etc...

A child should not be taken into care until its problems have been studied by a number of experts from different disciplines. The child should visit the institution before going to live there.

Born again

In Normandy, one lunchtime, a taxi dropped off a girl of about twelve with a big doll under one arm, some plastic bags and a suitcase. The taxi driver gave me a file. "The lady escorting her had to catch another train right away and asked me to give you this!"

Josiane came in. She had been living with mentally handicapped children while waiting for a place in our institution—but nobody had, in fact, ever contacted us.

Are there still escorts who know nothing about the child or its family or the institution—and who have another train to catch? They said what they could to cheer the child up—whatever came into their heads.

Then the child arrives in the institution —sometimes after having been in as many as eight other places. He is undressed and deloused. He is asked unending questions, over and over again. His belongings and his background are taken away. His problems are taken away—it is a complete break. Here you are, born again. Our institution is powerful, and you are weak. It is rich, and you are poor. You are nothing without it. The landmarks in your life are all

going to change—and we will give you new ones *in loco parentis*. Your cries will give way to silence—we will tell you when to make yourself heard. Our organisation will soak through you like medicine, like a drug. Don't be afraid to adapt yourself to it, there will be all sorts of things that you will like. You will never be on your own. Your worries will all disappear, except one: how to live without us. To live in the institution or to get out of it, you must behave well and accept the work of those who are doing all this for you. You must accept the people who run it, who are running you.

People will take over your problem, and give you a new lease of life—all ready-made. People, who will be everything to you—just what you always wanted. A caricature?

The institution is overbearing because it is totalitarian. The relationship it implies is one which stifles you, which slowly violates your being.

Everybody is aware—from press reports, of course—of the instances of physical and sexual brutality to be found in some institutions. When professional youth workers speak out against this brutality, very little attention is paid to them. The Establishment protects its own. So, things find their way into the papers—with all the distortions that this implies. In addition to these relatively well-known instances of mistreatment, other examples can also be found. Cosmetics are tested in the form of free samples, and pharmaceutical products are also tested on children in care.

"The institution is overbearing because it is totalitarian. The relationship it implies is one which stifles you, which slowly violates your being."

There is also violence of a hyper-methodical education where everything is covered by the syllabus. Nothing is left to chance, either in space or in time—neither letters, which are opened; visits, which are not allowed; or trips back to family, which are spaced out, cancelled or prohibited. Advantage is taken of children for the purposes of behavioural science, medical science or psychiatry. The end is held to justify the means. In other cases no changes are made as they might upset dedicated workers. The institution is a law unto itself.

These are the new prophets of the Absolute, specialising in lost causes... Live shows with an educational content... The theory propounded must be shown to work, and the drive to succeed becomes violent.

Violence by mental anguish

There is also violence by children against each other, against the staff, against things around them. Against animals. Violence that is unchecked by a team that is too small, that has not had the right training. There is no intervention by any third party, by any advisor or supervisor. The cyclone gathers strength. In the centre—the most violent area—things are moving towards a very bad end. People all around will be acting more or less strangely—from the strongest to the weakest. The weakest—it may be an animal—is going to suffer a great deal, and will doubtless die. People going sick, people taking action, actions misfiring, people getting hurt, things getting broken. Ever more quickly. And there is violence at the other end of the institutional tunnel, where inmates are forced into conformity in order to get out, or where their stay is extended for no good reason. Repeated, brutal rejection. Violence by mental anguish: I am leaving but where am I going? The weight of confinement fatally oppressing the inmates of institutions—is

"An institution should provide a service, not oppression and cruelty, and treat its inmates on equal terms"

this a caricature? What can be done to avoid the risk of violence?

An institution should, first and foremost, be open and penetrable. People both inside and outside the institution should know what is going on there.

The organisation is a means, rather than an end in itself, and should tolerate a number of educational and ideological trends side by side. One should beware of dominant doctrines calling for results to be justified. The child or young person does not belong to the institution—he or she can leave at any time. When collective life implies problems of co-existence, individual solutions should be sought. The institution should be able to diversify its functions.

Families—of whatever kind—should be associated with the workings of the institution and kept informed of decisions that are made. New developments in the system could enhance the scope of social action. The social environment preceding the stay in an institution should not be obscured. The staff of the institution should be sufficient in number and adequately trained, and it should maintain as many contacts as possible through continuous education, professional associations, trade unions etc...

The institution should be open to the place in which it is located, be it town, neighbourhood or village. No youth worker should ever work on his own, in a one-to-one relationship. The appropriation of a young person or a relationship based on the power of fascination are very propitious to violence.

The integrity of a young person's personality must be recognised, with the permission of all concerned, together with his background, his roots and his relationships. The institution cannot be a straightjacket, even a flexible straightjacket. It is there to provide a service.

The prolongation of dependence on the institution, without good reason, must not be allowed—it is a violent act. The failure or the success of a client is not the same thing as the failure or success of the institution. Its success can be measured by the quality of its service and the competence of its staff; its openness to the outside world. If one can live without another person, that can enable the other person to live—without subordination or obligation. Without violence.

An institution should provide a service, not oppression and cruelty, and treat its inmates on equal terms. ■

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Schools and violence

Violence in schools is not talked about very much. A short news item may catch our attention for a while, but in the school sphere much more has been said and written in condemnation or—in a few cases!—praise of teaching methods, curricula, school buildings or the education budget. As far as I know, no study has been made of violence in schools as such, and if the subject is ever mentioned, it is depicted as the result of a deteriorating school, family or social situation or as an example of deviance. People hesitate to acknowledge violence as one of the ingredients of a child's or young person's life.

And yet, if we could evaluate the amounts of natural energy, vitality and aggressiveness that build up in the veins and muscles of a child of 8 or a youngster of 15, we would realise that, by comparison, the tiger in *our* tanks is a castrated pussy cat.

Among educational authorities, attitudes are guarded. There are, of course, high-risk situations as well as situations where the risks are minor. In a lower-secondary school attended by non-achievers from the suburbs who are about to go out into the world with nothing to look forward to but a drab future on the dole and who have little interest in activities like sport which would

Childhood and adolescence are no picnic, as we can all remember from our own schooldays. Should we be so surprised therefore that, with modern society as their model, children today indulge in even more aggressiveness, boisterousness and bullying than we did?

enable them to work off their mounting aggressiveness, there is every likelihood that the buildings will be severely damaged, that fights will break out daily with growing intensity and that ragging will become increasingly ferocious and eventually result in vendettas, sometimes even to the detriment of teachers.

As for thefts (ranging from the filching of sweets in nursery school to the "borrowing" of motorbikes in technical colleges), only the naive still take offence, it is said. Head teachers observe the situation and deplore it, meting out punishment whenever they can, but invariably giving in and conceding defeat in the end. It is simply a replica of the adult world, as anyone in charge of public buildings will tell you: things are stolen everywhere, in hospitals, theatres, offices and workshops, so why not at school?

Who is being violent to whom?

This comparison may seem startling, but let us give it some thought. Take the case of a three-year-old boy who arrives at nursery school at seven o'clock in the morning. He will not leave it until six in the evening: crèche, school, canteen, school and crèche again. Eleven hours spent at what is for him his place of work. How many adults would put up with that? Eleven hours at a stretch, with constant presence of others, all the others, each trying to make more noise than the rest, not allowing anyone to have a moment to himself. "I like going to the lavatory", says Clementine (5) "because I am all by myself". And for some children things will go on in this way throughout the period of compulsory schooling, for eleven or twelve years. Who is being violent to whom?

A high-level education officer points out that schools in the 1980s no longer segre-

gate "problem cases". Twenty years ago a difficult, undisciplined or ineducable pupil would have been transferred to a special institution or even a reformatory. Even writing these words gives one a jolt. Fortunately it is no longer customary to separate children from the mainstream (except in very serious circumstances or in the case of persistent offenders). As a result, the "problem cases" are present, visible and often turbulent.

This more open-minded attitude on the part of schools is accompanied by two other factors: as paediatricians will vouch, children in 1985 are a year or two in advance compared with their parents' and grandparents' generation. Puberty and its various effects on behaviour are occurring earlier.

Secondly, children are speaking their minds at an even earlier age. The sort of remarks now made to teachers by pupils between 9 and 15 years old would previously have been considered insolent or impertinent and would in any case have been made by someone older. Today teachers are no longer held in regard or respected as a caste of untouchable superiors.

The media, which will have been the constant companion from the cradle onwards of all those who reach the age of 20 in the year 2000, exert an undeniable influence through their daily output of violence, death and various forms of torment (famine in Ethiopia, death throes in Colombia, public executions elsewhere). The impact of violent images shown over and over again in great quantities and the implicit confusion between fictional films which glorify violence and news reports which ought to denounce it, are in themselves a sufficient explanation of the tendency of young people to act violently. Playing at Rambo, hijackers or Goldorak does not particularly encourage tender or considerate behaviour.

Brimming with vitality

Schools are seeking to be more tolerant and receptive towards children, who are assailed from a very early age by a welter of inducements to consume (supermarkets where everything is so temptingly within reach), subjected to a hectic living pace (the daily commuter grind or, even worse, unemployment) and bombarded by a flood of information containing both real and fictional horror, all mixed up together. And all this happens to an age group brimming over with vitality and changing all the time. However, although schools may want to be more welcoming, they forget or ignore some well-known principles, such as the maximum number of pupils that can properly be catered for. It has been established that the critical threshold is reached once the number of pupils in a school rises above 800-900. But they are nevertheless packed in to overflowing point, and violence inevitably erupts.

In the lower school classes, where, for reasons of safety, it is essential for children to be supervised outside class time, it has long been acknowledged that, although the present system is a sound one, albeit often based on a model dating from the last century, the premises are frequently insufficient or unsuitable. You only have to go to lunch in a canteen with 80 children to be convinced of this. It would be downright dishonesty to say that anyone can relax there, that the atmosphere encourages tolerance, attentiveness, cheerfulness or conviviality. The sound proofing is just like that of some council flats where a knife being dropped on the sixth storey can be heard on the ground floor.

All things considered, our children are a fairly robust and healthy lot. Given the examples we set them and the physical, emotional and intellectual turmoil they experience, they don't do so badly. If schools are a mirror of the society around them, the mirror may be said to reduce rather than magnify the scale of things. ■

Liliane Urben
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Schools are often packed to overflowing point—and violence inevitably erupts

Criminality and the mass media

Great media publicity around violent crimes can sometimes provoke an increase in crimes of a similar kind. How can the media resolve the dilemma: publish, at the risk of stirring up hysteria, or "stifle" important news?

In the beginning of the summer of 1984, a number of plastic bags containing the remnants of a murdered woman were found in Stockholm. This incident received enormous publicity in the Swedish media. Of course, it is not possible to decide why, of all the 130 murders, homicides and fatal assaults which are committed in Sweden every year, this one should have had such an impact. There are a number of factors, though, which may have contributed to this incident attracting such attention: the body had been cut up; from the beginning there was no identified suspect; the bags had been found very close to the place where three of the country's biggest newspapers have their offices; the incident took place during a time of year when there is usually little news; in the case of several media, a great deal of the regular staff were on vacation, and had been replaced by substitutes who needed to show their journalistic skill to increase their chances of getting an appointment in the future.

Later, the journalists were informed that possibly the murderer was a young doctor and autopsist at the medico-legal institution in Stockholm. The man was, according to the mass media, suspected of having committed a previous violent crime. A fact that spoke against him was also that the cutting-up of the body had been carried out professionally. The name of the man was never published (as names of suspects and convicted people are never published in Sweden), but considering that the number of young legal pathologists in the capital of Sweden is limited, anyone interested in knowing the man's identity had no difficulty finding it out. After the inquiry, the police let the man go for lack of evidence. According to the law he was innocent—the public had another opinion.

Even a very dramatic murder cannot last for ever as a subject for the front pages of the newspapers. So public interest in this macabre incident decreased day by day. But for the whole summer the media continued to report murders and serious violent crimes with greater fervour than usual. As the first incident had reaped journalistic rewards, the media continued on the same path.

Each summer a number of serious violent crimes are committed in Sweden. The summer of 1984 was no exception in this respect. If all such incidents were reported, they could fill every page and column of every newspaper in the country. Even the journalists themselves began to feel that there was an extreme wave of violence sweeping over the country. Unaware of the fact that they themselves had created the change they were describing, they passed on their impression—that violence was increasing—to the public. The public quickly reacted with increased concern about the situation, which the media in their turn reflected through readers' letters, quickly arranged interviews with the so-called man in the street, etc.

Soon, different ideological groups started to speak up. Women's organisations demanded that the authorities should take measures to guarantee women's safety in the streets. Temperance leagues started to demand strong action against alcohol consumption, which is usually considered a factor in provoking violence. The police, the social authorities and other bureaucratic systems also took the opportunity to use the media to point out that they lacked resources for dealing with the situation.

Wave of concern

The wave of concern which swept the country did not fail to affect our politicians. They were forced to prove themselves active and resolute. In situations such as these, the political establishment invariably reacts in the same way: by demanding (if in opposition) or by promising (if in power) more severe punishment for the type of crime which is under debate at the time.

The most interesting aspect of all this is that during that summer there was in fact no extreme wave of violence in Sweden. On the contrary, my calculations show that the rate of violent crime was somewhat lower than that of the year before. This is something we should be relieved about: it sometimes happens that great publicity around certain types of crime (particularly macabre acts of violence of this kind) in fact leads to an increase of crimes on the same pattern as that described in the media.

I have referred to the risks of certain types of crime resulting from the great attention paid to them by the media. Apart from this, a few other risks may be mentioned here.

There is a risk that innocent persons may be accused, with possible tragic consequences for their lives. In this case, for instance, I do not know what happened to the suspected young doctor. Personally, I hope that he was in fact guilty of the murder—otherwise I will have to accept the thought of having witnessed an enormous injustice.

The public may receive a completely incorrect picture of the extent of certain types of crime and of crime trends. This can lead to a severe exaggeration of the risk of being a victim of crime which makes people protect themselves more than necessary. In the case of violent crime, the fear may, for example, cause people not to go outdoors at night—or at all. This means a reduction in the quality of life of these people and at the same time it diminishes social control, leaving the field open for criminals.

Harsh and unwarranted increases in penalties as a panic reaction by politicians may lead to unnecessary suffering for people, without having the preventive effect intended. Furthermore, longer prison sentences increase the expense to society of the treatment of offenders.

Different bureaucratic systems may use media attention to put forward demands for an increase in their own powers and resources. These kinds of demands, which do not necessarily coincide with society's needs, are constantly put forward by all bureaucratic systems as part of their struggle to survive and to expand. It may be dangerous to meet such demands from the police or other authorities without reflection. Apart from the economic consequences to society, such measures may also have consequences for legal rights, other institutions' opportunities to work etc.

Overhasty decisions?

There are probably still further negative consequences of this phenomenon which I have not mentioned. However, the most important question, in my opinion, is to know which factors really govern the crime policies of our country. To what extent are they governed by knowledge and by careful consideration based upon this knowledge, and to what extent by the kind of pseudo incidents such as the non-existent wave of violence described above? In other words, to what extent are the decisions made on issues of criminality and measures taken to prevent it—issues that are crucially important to "ordinary people"—ruled by the commercial interests of the mass media and the bureaucratic interests of different authorities? To what extent are our crime policies the result of a profound democratic process or a collection of overhasty decisions, enforced by the media and other pressure groups?

"To what extent are our crime policies the result of a profound democratic process or a collection of overhasty decisions, enforced by the media and other pressure groups?"

As far as I know, very little research has been done in this field. Thus, the questions put here cannot be answered. I have a strong impression, though, that when the punishment for drug trafficking in Sweden was increased a couple of years ago, because of a wave of drug abuse that was sweeping over the country, the factual basis for the decision was of more or less the same character as the "facts" of the wave of violence in 1984. I can hardly believe that this has been the only case or that Sweden is exceptional in this respect.

It might even be that the issues surrounding the relationship between criminality and the mass media are of greater importance than the much debated issue of the connection between video violence and violence in society. The issue of video violence is so simple—it is easy to take sides, depending on whether you happen to believe in the research saying that video causes violence or if you believe in the research saying that it does not.

As regards the importance of the media to crime policy, the issue is much more complicated. I am convinced that the media cause great harm through their way of reporting on criminality. On the other hand, if the media did not cover criminality at all or—even more important—critically scrutinise the authorities responsible for fighting crime, the damage would probably be still greater. ■

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National Council for Crime Prevention,
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Violence against women

An Italian women's co-operative has tried to break the silence surrounding the subject of rape, incest and other forms of violence against women.

Among the countless news items that fill the dailies and weeklies, on which "experts" are inevitably called in to comment on television, there was recently a sordid case of incest in Italy. In some God-forsaken village, a scandal concerning a very large family living in dire poverty came to light. It was discovered that all the males in the household (father and sons) were forcibly exercising their alleged right to sexual intercourse with all the females (daughters/sisters). The background of poverty makes it a textbook case. What is "scandalous" is the connivance of a whole clan of men and the duration of the violence—apparently over 15 years. Another thing that makes it a textbook case is that the community said nothing about the constant aggression; the silence was broken only when one of the young rape victims had the courage to speak out.

It is a classic situation, but one that we tend to think of as occuring outside the mainstream of society. Such things take place on the dusty soil of Southern Italy, or in Alpine villages, where inbreeding is rife and goitre prevalent, or in derelict outer city suburbs. We middle-class city-dwellers think along quite different lines and our behaviour patterns are different: sexuality is freely expressed and sex takes place between equals. Let us leave the brutes where they belong and make sure they stay there.

But how do you explain the silence? Well, do we not say, "Mind your own business"? If it suited them... So it suited them? It actually suited them? It's possible... Well, does it concern you too? Goodness, no! It's nothing to do with me!

Let us now turn our attention to Rome. About five years ago a film production co-operative decided to make a study of prostitution, based not so much on the behaviour of prostitutes as on that of their clients, as from the point when the purchase of sexual services was negotiated.

A group of women working in the co-operative had already, among other things, produced a documentary that caused a great stir, entitled *Processo per stupro* (Trial for Rape). For the first time, a camera was taken into a courtroom to film the accused (a group of young men), the victim, the judges, the lawyers and the witnesses. Using this simple expedient, the women courageously disclosed a picture of institutional violence that took the form of role reversal: the rape victim was made to appear the guilty temptress. By filming faces, gestures, expressions, words and silences, the television camera voiced what was unsaid and showed what was unacknowledged. What was invisible—or, rather, visible but unseen!—was unveiled simply by looking through a lens and, through this lens, objectively recording facts.

When divulged (it was also planned to show the documentary on television), the facts, which despite the fact that they are there for all to see are, nevertheless, not well enough known, sparked off a debate not confined to the report of the trial, which helped to open people's eyes to a violent practice all too often accepted by everyone—from the man in the street to the judge—being considered only natural.

Processo per stupro made a great impact on public opinion partly because it coincided with a period of intense activity in the women's movement prompting a

campaign against latent sexual violence and its acceptance as part of the fabric of society rather than an isolated hangover from, or relic of, ancient practices typical of an agrarian society. It was rightly pointed out that many such practices were basically regarded as the exercise of a right, on the grounds that a woman's body was "necessarily" and "naturally" an object that was always at man's disposal. To women, the condemnation of sexual violence had very different implications from any condemnation by men, who, concentrating on the "scandal" of exceptional, isolated cases, often ended up pursuing their own fantasies—their own hidden, unspeakable desires. In fact, the women's condemnation was and is an extremely subversive act with the rejection of general sexual availability and, therefore, an assertion of freedom. And it is this which, in any debate on sexual violence, causes the greatest fear and triggers the fiercest reactions, as we shall see.

Stifling reform of the legislation

The controversy that surrounded *Processo per stupro* also came at a time when there was pressure to reform the legislation on rape. What was being called for was an Act of Parliament that was innovatory in many respects and which, among other things, took account of rape within marriage. There are many such cases, stemming from the ethics of conjugal "duty". The women's movement had succeeded, not without a struggle, in persuading the left-wing parties to take up the proposal that there be statutory provision whereby a husband guilty of rape could be prosecuted automatically (without the need to bring a private prosecution), but it would seem that the Bill as a whole has been bogged down in Parliament, and more than two years later, attempts are being made to stifle it by means of endless committee meetings.

To go back to the activities of the film co-operative, the women turned their attention from a rape trial to prostitution. Here the practices, arguments, circumstances and, in particular, legal framework are quite different. Prostitution in itself is not unlawful, even though it is strewn with legal pitfalls (soliciting and procuring). Recourse to prostitutes is a widespread social practice. The financial turnover can be neither monitored nor quantified, but it certainly runs into tens of thousands of millions of Lire *per annum*. Yet, despite the fact that it clearly takes place and is a daily occurrence, the purchase of sexual services is a taboo subject and society draws a veil of connivance over it.

Prostitutes are women whose bodies are available at all hours for money, but who are also involved in an ambiguous game in which the dividing line between what can be said and what cannot be said, and what is visible and what is invisible, is a very fine one, since the prostitute displays her wares in public, but sells her goods —sex—in complete privacy. And it is she—rather than the man—who bears the full brunt, in social terms, of having to exhibit her own body while safeguarding the client's anonymity. There was only one way of denouncing the violence attending this practice—the social violence to the woman—and that was to break the secrecy surrounding the man. And so it was that eye of the cine camera entered the prostitute's room, focusing not so much on her as on him, the hidden client. Mercilessly, although not immodestly (the idea was to film not so much the sex act as what happened beforehand and afterwards), the camera again lingered on gestures and words, revealing sexual baseness, uninhibited whining, arrogant demands, petty haggling, refusal to pay in advance... and even rape by the local policeman, who forcibly helped himself, free of charge, because he had, by then, established a right to do so in the district.

The women in the co-operative had succeeded in setting up an experimental observation post by installing a hidden camera in the next room, with the prostitute's consent. In order to preserve the client's anonymity—but not hers: the face of Véronique, as she is known, is already familiar to the public—various technical expedients were used. For instance, the pictures were solarised and the voices deliberately distorted. In particular, the director chose to focus not on the faces but on gestures. Lastly, the sex act was not shown.

The documentary, entitled *AAAA. Offresi* (For Sale), was bought by the Italian Radio/Television Corporation (RAI—TV) and was about to be put out. This was early in March 1981. Suddenly there was an uproar. The press ran features on the subject of sex and privacy, taking various stands. A Christian Democrat member of parliament brought pressure to bear so as to prevent the programme from being broadcast; more protests, more unproar in the daily papers followed. In fact, the entire gamut of male sexual fantasies, having been released, was in the limelight. And here was the real voyeur accusing others of voyeurism... But this outburst was also a landmark, with many speaking out against hidden violence against women and society's connivance. A halt had to be called in the interests of order. A judicial complaint from an ordinary citizen or parent's association, for instance, was all it needed. The film was confiscated and an inquiry conducted into the co-operative and its members.

The hearing took place recently, in November 1985, and the judgment was delivered on 13 November. The women were all given a full acquittal, but the film will remain confiscated. An honourable compromise? Or a newer, more modern way of censuring what we see and think? ■

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A street on a Mediterranean island where child prostitution is practised, essentially for the benefit of tourists

A response to violence

Based on his own experience in psychiatric practice, the author points to explanations as to how violent personalities develop.

The challenge of violence strikes at the very roots of being, colouring our relationships with our fellows. Violence has placed its stamp on all societies, from their inception, through the fragile equilibria of order and subversion to the final disintegration. Images and headlines of violence never fail to fascinate us, provided they are a comfortable distance away. We look on from outside! But what of the reality of violence?

It goes without saying that this short article does not pretend to resolve the fundamental issue: rather more modestly, I shall concentrate on certain avenues into which my own experience has led me.

After seven years of psychiatric practice and thirteen years of specialised prevention work I came, little by little, to specialise in follow-up work with people with violent personalities, in training social workers dealing with them, and then in helping the victims. I shall follow the same progression in developing my ideas in this article.

There is a certain danger in talking about violent personalities, if in doing so we reduce the act of violence to a single cause and locate that cause within the individual. In that way we overlook the existence of explosive situations, and of ways in which circumstances, groups, culture and the environment may predispose to violence. We forget too that when violence erupts it does so within a given relationship, either as the final stage in a protracted conflict or as a sudden impulse, a violent response to an innocuous action.

What is more, violence can be expressed in a variety of forms: physical aggression and destruction of property are the most obvious, but it can also assume less palpable forms, such as hurtful words, manipulation and incitement to hatred.

Although force of circumstances may prod anyone into an act of destruction, whether turned outwards towards someone else or inwards towards the self, there are nevertheless some people who are more likely than others to express themselves through violence. They tend to repeat a pattern involving lengthy series of acts such as physical aggression, accidents or suicidal behaviour, interspersed with periods of imprisonment or treatment in a never-ending round of internment and exclusion.

In general they do not really relate to the law. A deprived background, with frequent episodes of fostering or institutionalisation, violent parents, parents who fail to impose any authority, identity problems, blows received for no clear reason, is the burden they carry through life.

People like this often find it hard to talk about their violence, either because they cannot apparently express themselves except through violence, or because for them talking is nothing but a way of justifying their actions: talking about blows given leading inevitably back to blows received. And maybe the two are indeed the same.

Higher orbits

Given this background, educational and therapeutic measures are hampered from the outset. As adolescents, they move from one foster home or institution to another with increasing rapidity. There is barely time to register their presence before they move on. It is as though they were being sent into higher and higher orbits to reduce the risks of collision with anyone else.

"It is the frustration born of meeting people who refuse to see or hear them that prompts their urge to hit out more and more violently."

As adults they find themselves locked away for longer or shorter periods. If this is not enough, then medical treatment is imposed as well; or, if the initial situation consisted of medical treatment, they may be put away afterwards.

In a few short years they span the centuries separating the anarchic existence of the Renaissance "Ship of Fools" from the much later total denial of liberty, a historical process traced by Michel Foucault in his "History of Madness". Can nothing else be done?

The first thing is to confront the problem squarely and consider it from every aspect—the human dimension, security problems, economic aspects—facing up to the fact that, whether we like it or not, these people exist. It is the frustration born of meeting people who refuse to see or hear them that prompts their urge to hit out more and more violently.

The next task is to compare notes on our different approaches—inevitably partial and incomplete—to confound the pessimists whose own apathy bolsters their claim that "nothing can be done".

My experience of teaching combat sports and dealing with the psychological needs of violent adolescents gave me the idea of suggesting that they should exercise their bodies and speech simultaneously.

We use mime to re-enact violent experiences, exploring risk situations and identifying trigger factors through role play, and provoking anxiety and blows through free fight. In all the games geared to violence, language—"the word"—plays a dual role:

— in imposing limits on time, targets, force of blows given, and reconciling the subjects to the need to "keep their word";
— as the vehicle for association, memory, acting out fantasies.

Dominique's speciality is strangulation. He imagines squeezing a head between

his hands until "the blood and the brains come spurting out". Alain butts his victims in the face and smashes their noses in. He smiles, charms, approaches, takes hold and then lashes out. Sandrine always hits to the stomach. She has just dreamed that there was a baby in the lavatory pan and she pulled the chain. Christian, who simply pushes, has thrown someone out of a first-floor window. Frédéric has ended a prison sentence for slashing someone with a razor blade. He remembers seeing his father slashing his mother's dresses with a knife.

Broken fragments of the past

The combination of physical and verbal expression, with the imposition of limits on the one hand and on the other the confrontation with another person who is not an enemy to be eliminated but an opponent who listens and talks, may together help violent subjects piece together the broken fragments of their past and move on to something else—if they manage to find something other than violence to hang on to. It is for us to accompany them along this path.

The exclusion and imprisonment of violent persons reveal two kinds of institutional attitudes which are themselves violent:

— resignation, evasion, refusal to tackle problems, leaving the subjects prey to anxiety. Everyone waits for them to commit an act which will justify exclusion or imprisonment;

— oppression, where contact cannot be avoided.

Both attitudes are based on the polarisation of "them or us". The build-up runs through the stages of psychological warfare, threats and charm, seeking out weak points in the other's defences, breaking down resistance, exhaustion. Violent people's special background makes them past masters in the art of discord.

They seize on the weakest link and force an opening, sensitive to the meaning hidden in a look, a gesture or a tone of voice. They really know the ropes when it comes to manipulating and exploiting others, and are as adept at deceit as at actual violence.

Teams are strife-ridden until the troublemaker is sacrificed and excluded, after which no one likes to talk about what has happened. From then on, there are two possible approaches:

— one is to create a super-institution capable of dealing with every aspect of the problem in terms of both psychology and security, like the Philippe Pinel Institute in Montreal;

— the other is to form multidisciplinary teams working in liaison with existing institutions of whatever kind, helping them to cope with violent people and at the same time providing opportunities for involving these people in activities.

The advantage of this second approach (which is the one I adopt when called on to carry out "violence therapy") is that it is less cumbersome and provides support for the people concerned even when they have been excluded. It is important to form a team free of potential division. The first provides a greater sense of security and would necessitate some form of after-care following release.

Training those who deal with violence

There are certain essential points which must be taken into consideration in training people who will need to deal with violence:

— discussion of violent situations in practical terms: how does one deal with a crisis?; what triggered the violent response in one case and prevented it in another?; cut-and-dried formulae are more of a hindrance than a help because of the rigidity of thought and the mistaken certainties they engender. What can be done, however, is to become receptive to a flexible approach to resolving conflicts;

— learning what to expect: many situations can be foreseen; what prevents us from learning from experience?

— doing something about potential divisions, whether hierarchical, occupational or other... they play a crucial role in violence;

— involving people in ways which transcend their role and status.

Training of this kind has been devised for all categories of social workers, in all the sectors concerned. The focus at present is on multidisciplinary work. We have just held the second meeting between police officers, judges, educationists, and prison staff at the CFES, Vaucresson. We have shown that conflict can be resolved by working on violence, and this is the line we intend to pursue.

Listening to the victims, and more particularly the victims of aggression, we recognise a situation very similar to that of the violent personality. Victims too are also frequently excluded and isolated. They too relive the trauma in the form of dreams, anxiety or desires for revenge which identify them with their agressor. It is unusual for the process of law to enable them to escape the trauma.

As well as trying to provide information and counselling services at the Victims Aid Centre, we are centring attention on this question.

We have used "violence therapy" for a young woman, a rape victim, who can no longer control her own violence. She has already hit people. She thinks only of knifing any man who looks at her, in order to get back at her aggressor. We are considering organising group sessions for victims of aggression.

Conciliation brought about through our mediation enables victim and attacker to meet on different terms. As Laurent Hinkker writes, the task is "to help the offender and the victim, who both have an account to settle with violence, from opposite sides of the equation. Therein lies the challenge of a different kind of encounter."

To conclude this brief article, I can only hope that it will lead to further — European—encounters! It is only by spreading ideas and approaches that we can hope to change anything. The only response to violence is an encounter pledged to life. ■

Helping violent subjects piece together the broken fragments of their past...

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Cruelty to children

The maltreatment of children, either through brutality or deliberate lack of care, is a problem that has always existed. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a recent or growing phenomenon. However, the official statistics fail to account for the majority of cases and public services are poorly equipped to deal adequately with the number of cases.

It was not until progress in public health and medicine and the general rise in the standard of living had caused a spectacular fall in infant mortality and morbidity that it appeared abnormal and even scandalous for infant pathology to be caused by ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on children by adults responsible for their care.

In 1962, Henry Kempe, a professor of paediatrics in Denver (Colorado) published in collaboration with Silverman and the child psychiatrist Steele an article entitled *That battered child syndrome*; the authors affirm at the outset that the battered child syndrome must be systematically envisaged for any child with unexplained bruises, wounds, fractures or brain injuries, or when the scale and type of the injuries do not correspond to the explanations given by the parents. They stress the frequency of the syndrome, the tender age of the children concerned (usually under three), the tendency towards repetition and the seriousness of the injuries (10% of cases result in death). They specify the signs to look for in diagnosis and, in this connection, Silverman writes: "For an experienced doctor, bone injuries tell a story that the child is too young or too frightened to tell himself".

The battered child syndrome was therefore initially described in terms of physical injuries. That definition has been considerably widened, and today it includes children who are the victims of acts that are more difficult to prove because they leave no physical trace: controlled brutality, sadistic behaviour, rejection or emotional neglect, demands that are excessive or disproportionate to the age of the child. The long-term effect of such behaviour on the psychological and emotional development of the child may be just as serious as physical maltreatment. Lastly, two forms of ill-treatment have recently become the subject of growing concern:

— sexual abuse has been the subject of systematic studies and surveys covering incest (that between father and daugher is doubtless the most frequent example), child rape, paedophilia, child prostitution and the use of children for pornographic purposes;
— the violence to which some children may be subject in institutions that are supposed to be concerned with custody, care or re-education: foster families, day nurseries, hospitals, welfare homes for children, homes for the mentally hadicapped, juvenile delinquents or drug addicts.

Denial of elementary rights

Finally, millions of children throughout the world, including Europe, are the victims of poverty, malnutrition, exploitation through work under frequently inhuman conditions, certain customary sexual mutilations, and forms of torture that may extend to murder or imprisonment. Many feel that these situations can be neither judged nor condemned as a whole; they are too directly dependent on the socio-economic and socio-cultural condition prevailing in each country. However, some of these institutions are particularly shameful and represent a veritable denial of the elementary rights of children. It is these practices which must be denounced and combated.

Any epidemiological approach in the strict sense of the term would appear to be not only difficult but devoid of meaning. The official statistics cover only a small percentage of cases: they are the very tip of the iceberg. In fact, the visible extent of the phenomenon would appear to depend on the following factors: greater public awareness and improved training for workers in child welfare institutions; extension of the definition; the role of the mass media; legislative changes in respect of the obligation to report cases.

Under this fourfold influence, the number of reports of maltreatment of children in the United States rose from 7,000 to 100,000 in the space of ten years (1967–78).

An infant or a very young child who is the victim of physical abuse is nearly always in danger. Despite the progress that has been made and the detailed classification of clinical injuries, diagnosis is not always easy, and it is sometimes impossible to determine whether an injury is caused by an accident, a clumsy mistake or wilful aggression. Moreover, all are agreed today that when one is faced with a child who appears to have been maltreated or to be victim of malnutrition or emotional neglect, the important thing is not so much to identify the exact circumstances of the ill-treatment as to evaluate the danger to which that child is exposed in his/her family environment. Such an evaluation cannot be carried out by one person. It requires consultation between all those—doctors, social workers, teachers—who know the family, with a view to adopting the least

harmful solution from the point of view of the child's long-term interests.

In general terms, this evaluation has three components:

Data relating to the child. Some children are more exposed to the risk of maltreatment, notably children separated from their parents for varying lengths of time during the first three years of their lives, who experience behavioural disorders when they return to their natural families, which are then unfamiliar to them; premature babies, for whom separation at a time of fundamental importance for the establishment of the mother/child relationship is one of several decisive influences; twins.

Sometimes a child seems to be deliberately singled out as a victim of maltreatment within a family. In such cases, it may be found that the child has a special status (a child born of adultery or of a previous marriage); that the child is malformed or has a chronic disease; or that there are psychosomatic disorders to which the response of the parents may be one of incomprehension, rejection or aggressive violence.

The psychology of the parents. One of the parents may display marked symptoms of mental illness, schizophrenia, paranoia, perversion or may be unbalanced and aggressive. Alcohol is an important cause of physical abuse of neglect of children. The same is true of drugs, which are a source of increasing concern. Mental debility, all too frequently alleged on the basis of superficial evidence, can lead to inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the part of the parents. However, most parents who ill-treat their children are not seriously disturbed individuals; some are well integrated into their occupational environment and enjoy the esteem of those around them. These are the most awkward cases, which require on the part of all of us a better understanding of the nature of parental love.

The behaviour of some parents towards their children may be marked by a range of characteristics: indifference, aloofness, rigidity, intolerance of the child's "nervousness". They invoke rigid educational principles, claiming that they must be firm with the child from an early age, and they require exemplary behaviour on its part without any consideration for its age or faculties of understanding and adjustment. These immature, emotionally cold, intolerant and frustrated persons are incapable of accepting the constraints imposed by the presence of their child and they react with paradoxical and disproportionately violent manifestations of rejection or aggressiveness.

It is a remarkable fact that the childhood of such parents was nearly always marked by unusual, harsh circumstances in as much as they were either brought up in accordance with the same principles of rigid, cold discipline, or they were themselves the victims of physical ill-treatment. In some cases, because of the separation or death of their parents, they were from an early age brought up in institutions where they were deprived of tenderness and affection. Their memory of their childhood is one of lack of love and they retain a feeling of insecurity, failure and lack of self-esteem which seems to condition their behaviour towards their own children.

The relations between man and wife are an important factor in producing acts of maltreatment. It can be said that the risks of maltreatment are greater when both partners have in common a past which predisposes them to subject their child to the same ill-treatment which they themselves underwent. In the case of a couple, it may be difficult to know which of them is guilty of the maltreatment as both partners are frequently implicated. In the event of a conflict, one partner may make the child's body a vehicle for striking at the other.

The socio-economic and socio-cultural environment. Ill-treatment is practised in all sections of society without distinction. However, it appears from nearly all the studies that most of the children detected as victims of ill-treatment belong to "disadvantaged", "maladjusted" or "marginal" families. Indeed, it can be said that families at the bottom of the social and economic scale are much more subject to control and surveillance by the social welfare services and the police than the more well-to-do. Whether or not a case is reported depends not only on the seriousness of the ill-treatment or the element of intent, but also on the evaluation of the family environment by the medico-social authorities, and that environment is deemed unsatisfactory, suspect or satisfactory in the light of criteria influenced by opinions and prejudices concerning the fringe status or maladjustment of the family.

Moreover, these social groups, these families, are subject to very specific constraints imposed by the outside environment, which explains why they account for the majority of cases of ill-treatment. Thus, scarce means, unemployment, inadequate housing, displacement, being uprooted, isolation within the social group, are all factors which give rise to frustrations or tensions that help lower the threshold of tolerance of the child. Similarly, there is an unquestionable relationship between cultural indigence and inability to give vent to one's aggressiveness symbolically or verbally, and the use of violence then becomes the preferred form of expression. Finally, in some ethnic or social groups, harsh corporal punishment is still traditionally employed in the education of young children, although this does not signify emotional rejection.

Generally speaking, the measures taken in the light of this evaluation of the situation are of two types: maintenance of the child in its family, with the establishment of a system of total care combining the material and social assistance (which is usually necessary) with therapeutic assistance for the parents, and at the same time ensuring the safety of the child and protecting it against the continuation of ill-treatment by the parents; separation from the family environment when it proves to be too dangerous. This must never be considered a panacea since it nearly always entails the marginalisation of the child and the segregation of the family. Here again a system should be instituted, for joint care of both the family and the child placed elsewhere, in order to facilitate the maintenance of satisfactory links.

Prevention is without any doubt the field in which all professionals and non-professionals must act if there is to be a decline in the number of ill-treated children.

Nowadays in particular, however, most preventive action is instituted during the neo-natal period: identification of so-called "risk" situations, provision of specific forms of assistance before maltreatment occurs. ■

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International action to combat violence

The development of the international community's action to combat violence is of outstanding moral value because it presupposes unconditional disapproval of violence, an attitude which, without ruling out the possibility of establishing a scale of gravity and threat to the international community, nevertheless means unqualified condemnation of violence *in se* as a practice which invariably violates human dignity.

One such form of violence not predominantly international is violence in the family, examined by both the Council of Europe and the United Nations in 1985. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 26 March adopted Recommendation R (85) 4 on violence in the family, while the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Milan from 26 August to 6 September, drew up a resolution entitled "Domestic violence" which has already been adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Both documents are mainly concerned with defining lines of action which governments are recommended to follow in order to deal adequately with the problems posed by violence in the home, especially violence against women and children. The production of recommendations in this instance, as well as generally, serves a dual purpose, firstly in highlighting the serious nature of the matters considered so as to create awareness of them in states which have failed to accord due attention to them, and secondly as a means of disseminating knowledge of suitable technical solutions, if only at a scientific level.

On the other hand, international agencies serve a different function in connection with more markedly international forms of violence. The main consideration here is that the objective content of the most serious acts of violence nearly always constitutes either a *crimen iuris gentium* or a violation of international norms relating to human rights. In these instances, the work of international organisations is not confined to preparing mere suggestions for governments, but extends to introducing actual international norms which in substance demand that sufficient importance be attached to the type of violent acts in question in national statutes, calling in particular for commensurately severe penalties.

The international community's action to combat violence in the world forms a complex picture in which one definitely positive feature is that the international organisations have paid attention not only to those forms of violence which imperil the international community's general interests, but also to those whose effects remain within national limits.

Moving on from the mere formulation of guidelines, the provision of such international norms can be said to represent a second and more forceful level of intervention by the international community vis-a-vis violence. Many examples could be given—for example, the United Nations conventions on unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation, the taking of hostages and torture.

Violation of human rights

In the framework of the Council of Europe, it is significant that the acts of terrorism dealt with in the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism are specified by listing categories of crime, all of a violent nature, each of which can be regarded as a specific form of violation of human rights.

The relationship between "human rights" and "violence", moreover, offers prospects

The need for international co-operation at all levels to oppose violence

for further action by the international community concerning types of violence which hitherto have not received sufficient attention. It is well known that a tendency has grown up on a world level to look beyond conventional forms of crime, and a resolution concerning victims of crime adopted by the aforementioned UN Congress creates the concept of a "victim of abuse of power", such abuse being deemed to occur in all acts which, while not constituting violations of national criminal laws, do constitute violations of internationally recognised norms relating to human rights. If this line is followed, consideration can be expected to centre on those abuses of power (political, economic etc) which take the form of violent acts, since it is these which cause the most serious victimisation.

There is a third level of intervention by the international community which may be defined as the level of inter-state co-operation in the true sense. The need for co-operation, which can take various forms—although the main one is judicial co-operation for the punishment of acts constituting criminal offences (extradition, assistance with investigations, transfer of proceedings etc)—may obviously arise whenever a violent crime is committed, in which case the normal instruments governing inter-state co-operation will come into operation. However, the need for co-operation is particularly in evidence where specific categories of "violence" are concerned, and this gives rise to the creation of *ad hoc* international norms for co-operation which serve chiefly to reassert and reinforce the traditional machinery for judicial co-operation and require governments to use it more effectively and extensively.

Hijacks and hostages

Co-operation is especially important when the international or supranational aspects of the violent act are not purely incidental but form one of its essential features, or are very frequently and extensively present. This category includes, for instance, unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation and the taking of hostages, to mention two of the cases already considered in the conventions referred to above. Again, in matters of terrorism the aforementioned Council of Europe convention bears exclusively on the subjects of extradition and minor judicial assistance; as the most serious terrorist acts more and more frequently present international features nowadays, so that in some parts of the world it seems basic to the very phenomenon of terrorism, future standard-setting action by the international community can be expected to introduce new inter-state co-operation machinery. This is clear from the most recent document on the subject produced by the UN, ie the resolution on criminal acts of a terroristic character, adopted by the Milan Congress already referred to, which also centres on extradition problems.

Instruments concerning crimes of violence which are not markedly international may also lay down *ad hoc* norms for co-operation. This is the case with the convention on the suppression of torture already mentioned. In such instances the reason for creating specific norms lies not so much in considerations regarding the specific nature of the crime as in the fact that nothing that contributes to the fullest possible suppression of torture must be overlooked, and insufficient importance is attached to it—the substance of the second level of intervention described above—unless, as well as specifically national measures, legal machinery for effective inter-state co-operation is incorporated into national and international law alike. ■

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Frankfurt airport: this terrorist attack killed three people and injured 30. New ways of protecting people from such forms of blind terrorism must be devised by the international community